

# **CHILD PROTECTION AND BULLYING POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

All sporting organisations, which make provision for children and young people, must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid /unpaid) working for MUDEFORD PHOENIX G.L.F.C. have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Staff/volunteers are not trained to investigate situations of abuse nor decide if abuse has occurred.

### **Policy statement**

MUDEFORD PHOENIX has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in the club from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of the disabled and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. MUDEFORD PHOENIX will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in MUDEFORD PHOENIX through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by. MUDEFORD PHOENIX

A child is defined as under 18 (The Children Act 1989).

### **Policy aims**

The aim of the MUDEFORD PHOENIX Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of; MUDEFORD PHOENIX
- Allow all staff / volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- To establish a club officer position of Child Welfare officer (C.W.O.)

## The role of club Child Welfare Officer is:

- To know who the county F.A. C.W.O. is, and how to contact them.
- To refer any club child protection or poor practice concerns to the F.A. C.W.O.
- To seek advice from F.A./N.S.P.C.C. help line if the F.A. C.W.O. is unavailable or in the circumstances of child protection urgency.
- To seek advice from local social services or the police in an emergency.
- To encourage the club to discuss and implement the F.A.'s child protection policy.
- To encourage the club to utilise the F.A.'s child protection policy and best practice guidelines on recruiting volunteers and always requesting the following up of references.
- To encourage the club to discuss and implement the F.A.'s child protection and best practice guidelines on the use of images and organising travel, trips and tournaments.
- The Club child Protection Officer will also be the Club's F.A.C.R.B liaison officer.
- To ensure that the F.A.C.R.B. disclosure is used as part of the club's safeguarding initiatives and ensure the club carries out an F.A.C.R.B. check in respect of all volunteers/staff connected with the club.
- To support the club in identifying those who require a F.A.C.R.B. disclosure.
- To be responsible for the supervision and administration of all F.A. C.R.B. disclosure checks made on behalf of the club. This will include verification of an applicants personal details and home address.
- To inform the club committee of anything untoward that may arise as a result of F.A.C.R.C. disclosure that relates to a volunteer /member of staff connected with the club.

- To promote, support and encourage the benefits of the child protection and best practice education and awareness policy

## **Promoting Good Practice with Young People**

### **Introduction**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document. When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

### **Good Practice Guidelines**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within football:

#### **Good practice means:**

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.

- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. (NB however, same gender abuse can also occur)
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to *act in loco parentis*, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars. ( An unaccompanied coach should never travel with a lone child).

### **Practice to be avoided**

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.

**Practice never to be sanctioned**

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Share a room with a child;
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of *control*;
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves;
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

**NB.** It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed.

- If you accidentally hurt a player.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## **Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers**

All club volunteers/staff must be police checked via the F.A.C.R.C. unit. The collation and submission of the appropriate F.A.C.R.C. disclosure and relevant supporting documents will be the responsibility of the club's child protection officer.

All F.A.C.R.C. online disclosure forms must be completed personally by the relevant volunteer or member of staff.

The cost of F.A.C.R.C. disclosures will be paid by the club and a copy of the completed disclosure form will be retained by the club C.W.O.

The club C.W.O. will be responsible for confirming the information supplied by a volunteer/staff member prior to submission of disclosure forms. The C.W.O. must ensure that he/she checks the original documents supplied by a volunteer or member of staff prior to the submission of copies of those documents to the F.A.C.R.C. unit.

The club C.W.O. will ensure that any untoward information resulting from a F.A.C.R.C. disclosure or other relevant source is brought to the immediate attention of the club secretary or in his/her absence the club chairperson.

If any adverse information is received by the club which relates to a volunteer/member of staff it will be the responsibility of the club secretary ,C.W.O. and chairperson to agree a suitable course of action.

## **Responding to suspicions or allegations**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for, MUDEFORD PHOENIX in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

MUDEFORD PHOENIX will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

### **Poor Practice**

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant MUDEFORD PHOENIX officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

### **Suspected Abuse**

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club **Child Welfare Officer**, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Club **Child Welfare Officer** will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if *out-of-hours*.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Club **Child Welfare Officer** should also notify the Hampshire Football Association Child Welfare Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the Club Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the Hampshire Football Association Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a **need to know basis** only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Welfare Officer;
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
- The person making the allegation;
- Social services/police;

- The Hampshire Football Association Regional Development Manager and Hampshire Football Child Protection Officer;
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). \*

\*Seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws and Mudeford Phoenix's **data protection policy** (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

### **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

- The MUDEFORD PHOENIX Child Welfare Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the MUDEFORD PHOENIX disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the MUDEFORD PHOENIX Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children should always remain paramount.

### **Support to Deal with the Aftermath**

- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff. Use of Help Lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory (**The British Association for Counselling Directory**) is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: [bac@bac.co.uk](mailto:bac@bac.co.uk), Internet: [www.bac.co.uk](http://www.bac.co.uk)) may be a useful resource.
- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.



## **Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child). Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

## **Anti-Bullying Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone that knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officers. Mundeford Phoenix G.L.F.C. is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

### **Bullying can be:**

- *Emotional* being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- *Physical* pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- *Sexual* unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- *Discrimination* racial taunts, gestures, homophobic comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments,
- *Verbal* name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

### **Cyber bullying**

This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset some-one. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced'

from the incident when it takes place online and ‘bystanders’ can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts – *We understand bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person!*

### **Trolling**

This is the name given to posting deliberately offensive comments on people's social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action.

### **Our Commitment**

Mundeford Phoenix G.L.F.C. commits to ensure our website and social networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in our Policy

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **Objectives of this Policy**

All club members, coaches, officials, and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All club members, officials, and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.

All players and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.

**Bullying of any sort will not be tolerated.**

**Remember, If a complaint is made or an untoward incident is suspected;**

- Maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis only.
- Ensure the Club Child Welfare Officer follows up with social services.
- The Club Child Welfare Officer should also report the incident to the Hampshire Football Association Child Welfare Officer who should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in Football and act accordingly.

If you do not know who to turn for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with our Club Welfare Officers **Lisa Freeman** on **07826294949** you can contact the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111)

**What to do if there are concerns**

Information passed to the social services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following;

- Name of child
- Age of child and date of birth
- Home address and telephone number
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Behavioural signs indirect signs?
- Witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If it is not the child making the report has the child concerned been spoken to? If so what was said?

Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details

End of policy